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EDUCATION AND LIFE

BY ERNEST MARTIN HOPKINS
President of Dartmouth College

This thoughtful and lucid study of the true functions of education is the latest volume in the distinguished series of addresses on the Alumni War Memorial Foundation at Milton Academy.

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EDUCATION AND LIFE

A LECTURE AT MILTON ACADEMY

ON THE

ALUMNI WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

MAY 16, 1930

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BY

ERNEST MARTIN HOPKINS
President of Dartmouth College

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1930

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The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

PREFACE

INSTINCTIVELY, in overwhelming numbers, the youth of America has turned toward a higher and broader education as the first requisite of training for the great post-war task of reconstruction.

The instinct is sound. It has urged no abrupt break with the past; but it has accepted guidance only from those who have set their faces toward the future.

President Hopkins is such a guide, and his admonition will be heeded. Only as we steadfastly seek the truth, and use our growing powers in increasing the value of life to others, do we achieve a real advance.

W. L. W. FIELD

MILTON ACADEMY
September, 1930

THE ALUMNI WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

At Milton Academy

STATEMENT OF THE PLAN

Adopted March 7, 1922

There has been established at Milton Academy, in memory of the twenty-two alumni of the School who gave their lives in the World War, a permanent Foundation for lectures and informal conferences dealing with the responsibilities and opportunities attaching to leadership in a democracy. It is intended that the lectures shall be given and the conferences shall be led by men of preëminent ability and attainment in various fields of political or commercial administration or professional work, and that the Foundation shall provide an income adequate to the payment of appropriate stipends to such men, and for the publication in suitable form of the lectures delivered whenever such publication shall be authorized by the Head Master and the Executive Committee.

It is further provided that the names of the men commemorated shall be recorded on a tablet to be placed in the Chapel at Milton Academy, and that this tablet shall bear a symbolic device in bas relief, expressive of the spirit of the memorial and adapted for reproduction in miniature on all books and documents in which the further development of the memorial shall from time to time find expression.

Such a memorial as this will never grow old or wear out or be forgotten. Its full strength may be applied over and over again through the years to come to the solution of problems like those which led our country into the war, and to whose solution the men we commemorate intended their sacrifices to contribute.

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MR. HEADMASTER, Men of the School, Ladies and Gentlemen: As we come to this last exercise of several happy days, I want to express my appreciation of the friendship which has been extended to me here at Milton. I wish to thank the boys of the school for the interest they have given to the conferences that we have held together. Likewise, I crave the privilege of expressing appreciation of the friendship which the masters of the school have extended to me in every possible way and of the kindly hospitality of those into whose homes it has been my privilege to go.

It has been an experience happy in every way. New understanding has been given to me of what this great school is and of what is the material which makes it great. New optimism in regard to the future of the

country must needs come to one as he sees schools like this existent and producing men such as we see here.

We meet to-night in observance of exercises that constitute the memorial to men of this school who died in the Great War. The responsibility is not light upon one who assumes the obligation, which I am assuming to-night, of attempting to speak on a subject which has to do with the reconstruction of society in light of the lessons which were learned in the war.

There is an old principle of philosophy that there is no point in striving for 'freedom *from*' for mankind unless that freedom is to be utilized by mankind as 'freedom *for*.' There is little reason why one man should be eager to secure liberty for another man unless the second man is going to utilize his freedom to increase the value of life to others. Now, it is through the efforts and the sacrifices of men such as those whose

names have been read, that society continues able to offer the opportunities of freedom from and freedom for to succeeding generations.

We are more than a decade past the World War. The acuteness of sensations which we had at that time and the positiveness of convictions which we held during that period have in some cases been dulled. We are not quite as certain as we were in regard to certain contentions that we then made. However, there are few, whatever they may think of the individual German or of the German people as a whole, whatever they may think of the particular issues which brought us into the war and the particular results which came from the war — there are few who doubt that a domination of the world was attempted, that an effort was made to impose an authority upon society which we of the Anglo-Saxon peoples believe would have been detrimental to society. A desire was

demonstrated for organizing the world under a management which would have been abhorrent, we believe, to our principles of government. It was through the willing self-sacrifice of such men as those whose names are upon this honor roll of the school that we all — some of whom were too old to go to war and some of whom were too young and some of whom accepted the hazards of the situation and did go — have the opportunities that are ours in this day and time.

There is a Scriptural phrase which I like sometimes to try to interpret to the men with whom I have the most intimate and most continuous contact — the beauty of holiness. If we understand that the word 'holiness' and the word 'wholeness' are derived from the same root and are essentially the same in meaning, we perhaps get away from some of the theological connotations that otherwise attach to the former word. In the cases of these men whom we commemo-

rate, who accepted willingly the hazards of the war, who endured its rigors, who accepted the dire hardships and finally the necessity for supreme self-sacrifice — they were able to give service in a brief time which many of us will not be able to give to the world in like measure in whatsoever time may be allotted to us. Fittingly to their lives and to their accomplishments may be ascribed the phrase, 'the beauty of holiness'; that is, the beauty of wholeness.

A youth of the sophomore class enlisted in the first ambulance unit which went from my own college, and he was one of those who did not come back at the end of the war. But shortly after he had gone into active service he wrote a letter from which I took a sentence, which I have sometimes used. He wrote:

'Fritzie is getting intelligent. Instead of regular intervals between his shots, he is staggering them at the present time. Before

I guess wrong at the cross-roads, I wish I could know whether the folks at home are going to learn anything from all this.'

That is the question that I think we have to consider in a war memorial lecture, and that is the question which we need to consider at all times, as a matter of fact, if we are to show a due appreciation for the sacrifices that have been made in our behalf. To-day that question is unanswered which must have been in the hearts of many of those men, 'Will the folks at home learn anything from this?'

The war came like a flash of lightning on a summer's night, and in its dazzling glare were revealed beauties of the social landscape and at the same time areas bleak and desolate. Things that had not been noticeable in the normal light were revealed completely then, in sharp focus under the brilliant illumination given. And in this light and in the revelation that came from it, we

acquired a consciousness that smugness had gripped our civilization and that there had been an attitude which assumed that, because things were comfortable, they were therefore right. Thus, agitation for any change had come to be thought needless. Then, after the war and after the social upheavals which followed, we got the reverse of this. From thinking that everything had been all right, the tendency of mankind was to think that everything was all wrong. Such are the extremes of mental attitude between which we have swung in scarcely more than a decade. Even though the war is now fading into the dimness of distance, its effects on society are still acute. It is well for us to reflect upon the fact that within our generation will be largely determined to what extent the lessons of the war have been learned.

To-night I will speak for a little time on the general theme of the relation of education to life, or perhaps the relation of educa-

tion to the ordering of what we call life — how education is to make its adjustments to a kaleidoscopic situation that changes its pattern and changes its color day by day.

There is a legend that the city of Leyden was offered by William the Silent the choice between a university and freedom from taxation, as a reward for its gallant defense against the Spaniards. Statement is further made that the city chose the university. It is well for us to remember that this choice has been available to the American people in large degree, as to whether to choose freedom from taxation or to choose its system of schools and colleges which make up its system of higher education. Let us for just a moment consider what this means in the most material figures which can be offered:

There are being given year by year at the present time, on the basis of the average for the last five years, $140,000,000 in private benefactions to schools and colleges of pri-

vate endowment in this country. There are being appropriated, on the same basis of averages for the last five years, by the National Government and by State Governments, $125,000,000 a year for schools and colleges. And added to this, as a taxation upon the American people, even if indirect, are the tuition charges which these various institutions have to require of those in membership.

Let us take another avenue of approach to this question of what the schools and colleges are doing and what they are being asked to do: In 1927, it was stated that the total number of graduates from institutions of higher education in this country, since the foundation of Harvard in 1636, totaled approximately 800,000. In that same year, 1927, when in nearly 300 years 800,000 had graduated from our institutions of higher learning, there were enrolled in our institutions of higher learning in the United States, slightly

under 700,000. Mass production in education has become a necessity for us to consider.

Questions arise as to what this education must establish as its objective, what must be the influences made pervasive in it, and what must be the methods adopted in order to make it effective. This is one of the problems of the post-war period and one of the problems which have to be settled intelligently and understandingly if higher education is to be of the service to society which it needs to be if society is to be benefited.

I suppose that the worst definition ever given of the argument for undertaking a higher education was given by an ancient dean of Christ Church, who said that there were three reasons for seeking higher education, first, that the Scriptures might be read in their original tongue; second, that those educated might have due contempt for those who had not had opportunities for educa-

tion; and, third, that there might be the opportunity for increased emolument which came to those who had such opportunities for higher education. Well, we have outlived so narrow an idea as that, although I am not entirely sure that some do not go to colleges at the present time in order to extend condescension toward their neighbors. Nevertheless, the fact remains that throughout the colleges of the country there is in the undergraduate bodies a seriousness of purpose which is calculated to breed optimism among those who have the privilege of contact with the undergraduates.

There was another reason for a college education given in a small group where I was in attendance, a few years ago, in Chicago, when the talented Bert Leston Taylor, who was a member of the group, was asked to speak one night. He said that, after looking around, he felt he ought to be subject to an inferiority complex, realizing he was the

only one of the dozen present who had not had the advantage of a college education. He continued by saying that he had always queried what was the real value of a college degree, and that he had at last come to a conclusion. It was much like the associations that went with wearing a dress-suit. These did not do any one any particular good, but they did keep one from hanging around the livery stable. This is a negative argument, but it is not an argument to be disregarded. There are livery stables in our social life, and it is well that we should have regalia or insignia that make us feel out of place among these.

But the true purpose of education has never been better expressed than by Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, who said, 'It is clear that in whatever it is our duty to act, those matters it is our duty also to study.' This is the definition to which I wish to hold to-night.

There are those who think that a higher

education is an inalienable right of every American citizen. I do not believe this. I believe that every child resident in the United States has a right to the elementary education which shall give him the tools of learning. However, when the tools of learning have been given to him, the responsibility devolves upon him whether those tools shall be utilized or not. I believe we should hold very definitely to the principle that higher education is a privilege and not a right, and that those to whom a higher education should be given are those who desire it, those who seek it, and those who crave it for the privilege of using it.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding as to what democracy is all about. Democracy, as a matter of fact, at this particular point means simply that the man who is desirous of education and wants to use it shall be given the opportunity to acquire it, whatever his social station. But there is no

principle of democracy, so far as my interpretation goes, which requires that either the public in its taxation or the private individuals in their benefactions, shall provide higher education for men who are unwilling to accept it, on the one hand, or who are unwilling to utilize it properly, on the other hand.

None of the great corrections of social maladjustments which have come to society have come primarily from the uprising of oppressed masses. Freedom from oppression and freedom from cruelty, freedom from conditions which appall, have always come through the interest of the privileged classes, so far as intellectual attainments make privileged classes. It was not the downtrodden serfs of Russia who won some measure of freedom for themselves. It was the intellectuals and aristocrats who espoused their cause. It was not the downtrodden peasantry of France that won freedom for itself

from oppression, but it was the intellectuals and the aristocrats who assumed the responsibility and the burden of representing these people. It was not the downtrodden slaves in the South who freed this country from slavery, but it was educated people of responsibility and people who assumed that the dictates of conscience drove them to the defense of peoples who could not operate for themselves.

And salvation is going to come to the world always through the people of intelligence and social responsibility who accept the dictates of conscience to assume burdens of their brothers and to see that added measure of justice is injected into the world's affairs. But if salvation is to come promptly and without great waste of time and effort, judgment must be made accurate by wise education.

Senator Pepper once made a very sagacious statement, in which he said one of the

most tragic things in the world was the amount of time of the wise that it took to correct the mistakes of the merely good. If one follows through the history of our country or the history of social and economic progress in other countries, he will find how true it is that the emotional reactions to given situations of well-intentioned people who were without judgment, on the one hand, or without intelligence, on the other, have created abuses almost as great, if not completely as great, as those which it was desired to correct in the beginning.

Democracy requires that leaders shall assume the responsibility of persuasion, for no longer do we assume that there are supermen in the world who by mastery can effect even highly needful changes. And we here come to the argument for quantity in education as well as quality, and the argument is convincing in so far as it applies to the great mass of people who are eager for education.

I would not admit the proposition that men who are eager for a higher education should find it inaccessible. I feel certain, while we should not admit the principle of having higher education recognized as a right, that all who will consider it as a privilege should be given the opportunity to gain it, because in a democracy such as ours it is necessary that we have an intelligent group of followers as well as intelligent leaders. Possibly in an absolute monarchy or in a dictatorship one might concern himself wholly with the production of leaders. However, I think too much has been said in education in the past about the indispensability of producing leaders in our schools and colleges. I should be completely satisfied in a school or college if I felt that it was producing a group so intelligent as followers that they would choose at all times wise leadership or accept it when offered.

When we come to the question as to how

higher education should be utilized, we need to define its objective. What is it all about? And there is a confusion of tongues in regard to this. We are perfectly conscious that many of our processes of education and many of the methods which we utilize have not resulted in our getting due return, either from the money which has been expended or from the lives and careers which have been given to this process which we call higher education.

Chesterton says somewhere, in regard to Christianity, that it is not that Christianity has been tried and found difficult, but it is that Christianity has been found difficult and never tried. This is largely so, but as well it may be held true of education that education has been tried and found difficult by a host of people to whom the opportunity for education has been given, and in the conflict with ease educational advantage has been sacrificed. The opportunity has never

been available for discovering exactly what would happen to any country if all who had attended its colleges and its schools had availed themselves of the educational advantages which had been available to them throughout their courses.

If you recollect the figures I gave you a few moments ago, nearly 700,000 young men and women were in the colleges and universities of the United States in 1927. The number is probably larger at the present time. If it were possible for us to assume that we were turning out 700,000 men and women every four years who were in any large degree profiting by the advantages of education which had been theirs, it would at the same time be possible for us to expect the millennium at a much earlier day than there is any reason to expect it under present conditions. But the fault is not wholly, and perhaps not largely, the fault of the students who have gained access to educational ad-

vantage. The fault is somewhat that of the institutions which are offering the education. Most largely of all the fault is the fault of the outside public which makes no demand that these educational facilities be largely utilized.

Now, with what does education have to do? Here, again, there is a confusion in the thinking of people. Education has to do with the development of the mind. Somewhere I have seen the definition that the mind is the sum total of all the conscious states of the individual. If we are going to work to develop the mind of man, that is something quite different from what we ordinarily mean by developing the brain. It is to be noted that the development of the mind under these conditions has to do with creating conditions in which the conscious states of the individual shall be as advantageous as possible. The mind of a well man is a very different thing from that of a sick man. The

mind of a man in the morning after a night of restful sleep is very different from the mind of a wearied man who has spent the hours at the night clubs. The mind of one free from care is a very different mind from that mind which is largely oppressed with responsibility. And the nervous and apprehensive mind is quite a different mind from the mind of one of calm temperament. When we discuss education as the development of the mind of man, we have to recognize that the conditions which affect different individuals necessarily produce different minds in the individuals, and we not only have different individuals with different minds, but we have the same individual possessed of very different minds under varying circumstances.

To one who wishes to argue the general question of whether the colleges and schools are justified in doing this, that, or another thing which is somewhat apart, so far as the

critic may assume, from the general purposes of intellectual development, it is worth while to point out that the conscious state of the individual may be very vitally affected by whether, while he is in school and college, he learns habits of health, for instance; or the conscious states of the individual will be affected by whether, while in school and college, he learns a philosophy which will help him accept the rigors of life with as great resignation as may be; or whether, while he is in school and college, he tends to become a nervous, irritable man instead of acquiring those habits of repose which will make for the opposite.

So, in developing the human mind, education has a very different responsibility from that of sharpening the brain without the development of character, or conscience, or whatever you choose to call it. To sharpen the brain without understanding our relations with our fellows may result in the ed-

ucated man's becoming an added menace to society and an added hazard for civilization to accept in its time.

In this connection it is interesting to note that, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of education, we find increasingly through the centuries an emphasis placed on good bodies, on habits of health, and on environments that would be conducive for reflective thinking. Moreover, the presence of these is essential to any right theory of education, and the development of these may be necessary, I think, in even added degree in our schools and colleges if the mind of man is to become the effective agent that we wish it to become.

William of Wykeham wrote over the doors of New College, 'Manners makyth man.' The significance of this as an educational principle becomes clearer if we follow through to Ralph Waldo Emerson's statement that 'Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices.' No citizenship can be really

good in which individuals are not willing to subordinate their own individualities to some extent for the advantage of others. No citizenship is safe for the individual in which there is not accepted as a principle a willingness for common self-sacrifice for the good of the group as a whole. A race or a generation without any concern for good manners would almost certainly in like degree lack unselfishness.

Education is an understanding of ourselves in the first place, and, in the second place, it is an understanding of the world outside ourselves. Education is self-discovery. I have long thought that the unforgivable sin is the sin of violating one's own personality. I do not know whether the theologians would accept that or not, but it is the definition accepted by one interested in education.

What do we mean when we talk about self-discovery? Let me give an illustration! I stood on the side-lines on a football field a

few years ago; I was talking with the coach, and we were watching a man who seemed to have eminent promise, but who had never up to that time fulfilled any of this promise. He was tense and nervous. When a long-rehearsed play was called, he did nearly everything wrong that could be done with it, but the coach turned to me and said, 'That boy is going to find himself some day.' That forecast afterwards proved true. Later in the same afternoon, I went to the hospital to inquire about a boy who had been thrown from a horse that morning and who had been unconscious since. The nurse met me with a smile and said, 'He is himself again.' Somehow, the repetition here of what the football coach had earlier said in regard to his charge, this reiteration of the word 'himself,' began to hum through my brain, and I shortly recalled that it was said of the prodigal son that he came to himself.

It is an interesting thing that always we

think that the better and finer, the more generous and more considerate traits of a man emanate from his finding himself. We never say of a man that he has found himself when he embezzles a lot of money from a bank. We never say of a man that he has found himself when he has been picked up drunk in the gutter. None of the tawdry facts of life are associated with the phrase, 'He has found himself.' But when a man is no longer beside himself, when he has not lost himself, when he has not forgotten himself, he capitalizes his best qualities. When a man comes to the highest perfection, the greatest attainment of his own possibilities, we then say that he has come to himself, that he has found himself.

Guidance to one's self is the greatest thing that education can do for the individual man. It ought to enable him to realize what are his own finer qualities, what are the possibilities of those qualities, how they may be

made most effective for the enhancement of his own personality and for the liberation of those qualities which will make him useful to his fellows.

But education in a democracy must mean something more than self-discovery, though this is the first thing it needs to mean. It must mean an understanding of life about us. And here we come to the change in conditions of life which is producing a revolution in thought as to what is the objective of education. And we have to go back a few centuries to see the origin of the tradition of exclusive veneration of the past which has come to be a handicap for education at the present time.

The Dark Ages were really dark. During that long sequence of years, most of the learning of western Europe had been forgotten. Men lost their mental curiosity; they abandoned all of their mental aspiration. Even knowledge of the technique of

certain mechanical processes completely disappeared. The mind of Europe was largely stagnant. And then came the Crusades! Suddenly awakened, the souls of western Europe became uneasy and men pushed southwest across Europe and sailed for the Orient. Thus became available the culture of the Orient, with the riches of learning which had long been existent there, and in course of time these were brought back to Europe. The social and the intellectual curiosity being awakened by the great upheaval which had taken place, men turned their minds backward in the recovery of the learning which they themselves had lost and which had been so long hidden from them. The riches of Greek philosophy were rediscovered and Aristotle in particular became the patron saint of European learning. Men's minds were stimulated and made alert as they had not been before for centuries.

Tragically in the course of time this vast wealth of learning which had been brought in became a paralyzing force upon educational progress and intellectual betterment, because the conception arose that all orthodoxy and all authenticity were in the minds of these leaders of the past. Keen-brained men who had inquiring minds and men fired with zeal for finding new knowledge were pushed aside or executed if it was conceived that these theories and these propositions which were advanced were not in accord with the teachings of Aristotle and with the Greek and Latin learning. So gradually it came about that what had originally been the greatest impulse toward learning eventually became one of the greatest detriments to learning, and it became inevitable under such circumstances that there should be a revolt against what originally had been a keen incentive for men to utilize their minds and to sharpen their intellectual powers.

It is well for us to remember these conditions of the past because they were so active and positive in their workings that the influence of minds of great scientists like Roger Bacon and of the great philosophers were neutralized in the time in which they lived, and the values which might have been added to life were largely lost.

Then there came the great change of the Industrial Revolution. In my college days men were taught that there had been more of a change in the life of the world in the one hundred and fifty years since the Industrial Revolution than in the previous eighteen centuries. I think it was an entirely true statement, but I should like to add to the statement of that time my own conviction that there has been a greater change in the mind of the world in the last decade and a half than there was in the previous century and a half.

Mr. Raymond Fosdick has pointed out

that the time it took Napoleon's messenger to go from Paris to Rome at the end of the eighteenth century was almost the same time that it took Cæsar's messenger, approximately eighteen centuries before, to make the journey from Rome to Paris. In 1801, George Ticknor journeyed from Boston to Hanover, New Hampshire, to matriculate at Dartmouth College, and it took him six and one half days to make the trip. Recently a group of airplanes of the Marine Corps has made this trip in an hour and a half. At that earlier time, the only means of transportation, aside from packet ships, between Boston and New York was by stage-coach, and two stage-coaches and twelve horses took care of all of the traffic. Ordinarily, it was a seven days' trip unless the trip was forced by from fourteen to sixteen hours' riding a day, in which case it was made in six days.

If any one thinks these are exaggerated statements in regard to the time and the

hazards of transportation, I should like to read just for a moment a quotation from McMaster in regard to a trip of Aaron Burr's from New York City to Paulus Hook, which is now Jersey City.

'... The crossing of any of these streams was attended by much discomfort and danger; but the wide stretch of water which flowed between Paulus Hook and the city of New York was especially the dread of travelers. There, from December till late in March, great blocks of ice filled the river from either bank far out to the channel. On windy days the waves were high, and when the tide ran counter with the wind, covered with white-caps. Horse-boats had not yet come in; the hardy traveler was, therefore, rowed across in boats such as would now be thought scarcely better than scows. In one of her most touching letters to her husband, Mrs. Burr describes to him the alarm occasioned by his making the dangerous crossing.

How she had anxiously waited for his return, hoping that the dangers of the passage would deter him; how, when she heard that he was really embarked, she gave herself up to an agony of fear as she thought of him exposed in the little boat to the rough waters and the boisterous winds, and what thankfulness she felt when her son brought word of his safe arrival at Paulus Hook.'

Such were the difficulties of travel in those days, and the significant thing is the size of the world then as compared with the dimensions of the world at the present time. Not long ago a chart was issued showing that the size of the United States in terms of air-mail time as compared with train time has been so reduced that the United States in terms of aerial travel would be a little larger than one of the major mid-western States is in the older terms of transportation.

The implications of this whole thing have to do with this extraordinarily changed ex-

ternal world with which we must get acquainted after we have made the attempt at self-discovery. The transformation in the world in transportation and in intercommunication, and in the consequent speed with and extent to which information or propaganda can be spread, make for the most hazardous condition with which the world has to deal at the present day.

A few years ago Commander Peary required five months to get word back to the United States that he had discovered the North Pole. Commander Byrd radioed when over the South Pole and the world was almost instantly informed of the fact.

The significance of all this lies in the fundamental fact that in the days of which McMaster speaks knowledge, propaganda, new doctrines or new philosophies, ideas of any sort, could only progress at a horse rate of about four miles an hour and only in a single direction. If the ideas were erroneous,

if the propaganda was false, if there was revealed a hazard in the proposition, the thing wore itself out and its weaknesses were revealed before it could get very far. It is not at all inconceivable at the present day that, with plausibility enough and with money enough, the whole world could be approached by radio or other agencies within so short a time that practically all the peoples of the world coincidently would have had the influence of persuasive propaganda brought to bear upon them. Unless there be increased intelligence developed, and unless there be new sense of responsibility cultivated, the time will come when the degree to which this is possible may impose a hazard upon the world to an extent which it will not be prepared to meet. This is one of the problems of changed conditions.

Sir Thomas Browne said, in the seventeenth century, that there was no longer opportunity for men to be ambitious, that all

the great mutations of the world had taken place. There are always people who think nothing more is going to happen, and if education concerns itself sufficiently with the past, that education will have met its complete obligation. But if we accept the explanation I have given as to why for so long tradition demanded that education be a recovery of the learning of the past, and if we accept the further implication that the times are changing so rapidly at present that no man can know the conditions of to-morrow, I think we must arrive at the conclusion that the primary obligation of education is to form a habit of mind capable of dealing with new conditions — and that is essentially the theme of all that I have said or that I shall say.

The only importance of the recovery of the knowledge of the past, so far as education goes at the present time, is to profit by the experience of the race and the experience of

mankind at large to an extent that will make understandable new experiences. This is but another way of saying that education is a search for truth.

In times when individual men could master practically all of the learning available to the world, education naturally concerned itself with acquiring that mastery. The extent to which knowledge has increased, however, through later decades makes it impossible not only for any man to have any comprehension of knowledge at large, but likewise to have any complete command of any given branch of knowledge. Thus has arisen the age of the specialist.

There is a vast difference again at this point among different minds. One man, learned in a single branch of knowledge, and seeking to pursue this through to ultimate mastery of that branch, assumes that within the limited field which he has encompassed lie all available truths in regard to civiliza-

tion. Another man, however — and this is the type that the schools and colleges must strive to produce — recognizes that no final truth is known until he articulates his knowledge with the knowledge of other men specializing in like way within their respective fields.

We then have to consider the question as to what truth is. Is it the opinions we hold, the beliefs that we have acquired, or is it a resultant of all the beliefs and convictions that the world has together, or is it yet again something entirely different? The question is old. Pilate asked Jesus, 'What is truth?' — and the question went unanswered.

There is a play of Pirandello's, 'Right You Are,' in which the heroine says that she will not henceforth believe anything except the knowledge which she acquires through her sensibilities, what she sees with her eyes or feels with her fingers. And the reply is in effect that she will not know truth even then

unless she comes to knowledge of what others see and feel.

Herein lies the vital thing for mankind to attain in the way of conviction, that when we have made the new effort to come to a conclusion ourselves and when we have acquired a conviction in regard to it, nevertheless, we may not yet have attained fully to truth. The formula on the basis of which education has to operate is akin to the legal formula: the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. There is no fallacy any greater than incomplete truth, and there is no lie any bigger than the truth with something added to it. It has been said that a fallacy is dangerous in proportion to the amount of truth it contains. That is undoubtedly so. But if we are going to know truth, or if we are going to strive to attain truth, we must, in so far as it is humanly possible within us, gathering together the experience of the past and acquiring the

habit of mind which shall give us the ability to interpret the future, apply this experience to the problems which occur from day to day, and seek therein the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

One great difficulty in the way of truth being recognized among us is the lack of capacity of the American people for reflective thinking. We are subject to the great delusions that to be busy is the most profitable thing in the world and that what we do is more important than what we are. These are two delusions that education needs to concern itself with.

Walter Bagehot has commented on this situation by saying that civilized ages inherited the human nature which was essential to life under primeval conditions and that our instinctive nature is not at all suited to the circumstances of complicated civilization. There were no surpluses in the life of primeval man. If he was to live, he

must hunt and kill at once. Our far-back ancestors obeyed impulse to action immediately. In contrast, the complex life of to-day makes it essential that man should defer action until intelligence can pass upon its desirability.

Amplifying this, one can well consider the statement of Pascal that most of the evils of life arise from man's inability to sit still in a room. In the main, formalized education in institutions of learning offers the nearest equivalent possible to mankind at large for sitting still in a room and considering projected action before it is entered upon.

This is an important problem with which education must concern itself in its effort to create among men the habit of mind that seeks truth and recognizes it when found — that men shall be made interested in acquiring leisure and in utilizing leisure for gaining understanding of what is going on about them and of what may eventuate.

If we accept these propositions as at all valid, and if we recognize that education has to do with the mind of man, which is the sum of all the conscious states of man, we may be in a position eventually to make our educational processes and our educational methods more productive to mankind and more beneficial than ever before. The argument is not that modern education should ignore the learning of the past, but it very definitely is that the amount of emphasis which education formerly put upon the learning of the past should be lessened. It should be lessened to the extent necessary to emphasize the mental approach to problems, the approach which is necessary to make men capable of analyzing new situations and adapting themselves to these. This is what I have meant in reiterating the statement that the function of modern education is more to create a habit of mind than merely to gain knowledge.

Great gain would accrue to the world if the initial assumption could be made that there was any real understanding of the significance of the word 'education.' Not long ago I heard one of the country's foremost publicity experts say, in analysis of a given sales problem, that America must be educated to use the product in question. Recently the papers have carried the statement of one of the foremost drys of the country that America must be educated to prohibition. And in another column of the same New York paper which carried this statement, there was the statement of a committee of the wets that the country must be educated to see the evils of prohibition. Within the month I have seen an assertion, supposed to emanate from Russia, that the world must be educated to accept the doctrines of Karl Marx. Meanwhile, within a little time a prominent citizen, representing the Independent Oil Association before the

Senate Committee Investigating Lobbies, stated that his Association was formed to educate Congress to the necessity of a dollar a barrel tariff on oil.

As against such uses of the word 'education,' I should like to emphasize what seems to me to be the function which the word represents. Education's function is not to promote any propaganda, not to propound any principle as established and fixed for all time, not to assert that any belief is unchangeable, not to assert that any conclusion may not be mistaken. Permutations and combinations of life are changing too rapidly to make omniscience in regard to past or present thinking certain. I repeat, therefore, that education's one and overwhelming responsibility is to establish the inquiring habit of mind and a veneration for truth.

Under the rapidity of change in modern life, and especially as a result of the uncertainties which have been bred by the social

and moral upheavals of the war, there have entered into the educational theory of some what seem to me to be two great fallacies:

(1) That all which it is necessary to know about life can be learned from participation in it, even to the point of exclusion of any education about it.

(2) That nothing is worth believing that cannot be rationalized — that the mental processes of the individual are more important than the experience of the race.

In regard to the first of these, Professor Bagley of Columbia has made an interesting comparison. He tells of a man in the Kentucky mountains reputed to have been born in 1787, and certainly very old. This aged citizen had never been out of his local community and had heard only very indefinitely of anything which had happened beyond the confines of the community within which he lived. On the other hand, a boy of eighteen in a neighboring village, who had just gradu-

ated from the high school with a distinguished record of accomplishment, knew all about the outstanding events of the history of the United States on from the Constitutional Convention, the great movements of immigration opening up the West, the significant inventions like that of the cotton gin, down through the issues of the Civil War, and so on. Professor Bagley continues, amplifying the comparison thus made, by stating that by education 'we transcend time, living vicariously through successive ages of the past and knowing more about these than any person knew in the given period. We transcend space, living among distant places and knowing more about them than an untrained traveler could know. We transcend limitations of our own mind and establish contacts with the keenest minds of all time and all people. We consolidate the experience of the race and make its lessons available to the individual man.'

In regard to the weakness of rationalization, we find that, as soon as the principle is admitted that nothing is worth believing that cannot be rationalized, it begins to be applied indiscriminately and superficially. As a result we are asked to dismiss as intellectually unworthy patriotism or civic pride, school or college loyalties, family ties, or belief in fundamental religion. The weakness of rationalization is that the field of knowledge has become too great and our command of knowable knowledge in any individual case is too inadequate for us ever to be definitely certain how much we know about any given proposition. History is full of examples of individual men and of groups of men who have believed that they were possessed of final knowledge in regard to given propositions, when as a matter of fact later years proved these to have been in some cases entirely mistaken and in other cases possessed merely of such elementary know-

ledge as would make any final conclusions from this invalid.

In regard to this whole matter I should say, on the basis of my experience in meeting with the boys of this school in these last few days, as has come to be my somewhat common experience in meeting the youth of America of the present day, that the indications exist on every hand of the desire — and in many cases of the insistence — of youth upon being educated. Essentially it seems to me the education of our schools and colleges must strive, on the one hand, to establish a process by which the student gets some idea of the wholeness of knowledge and of the indispensable truth that no fact is of final importance except in relation to other facts, as no divided bit of knowledge is of large importance except in its relationships to those other branches of learning which go to make up complete knowledge. Meanwhile, however, higher education must insist upon

the student's getting some appreciation of what mental discipline signifies in right thinking, and consequently education must impose the requirement that the student shall go through far enough in some individual subjects so that he shall understand something of how intellectual command of a given field is attained. All genuine education being self-education, persuasion somehow must be injected into these processes so that they will be accepted by the individual students as reasonable and indispensable. We shall then be on our road to greater results from education than we have ever had.

A vital necessity in this whole matter, however, is that the outside public shall come to have some understanding in regard to these matters. Then their influence may be brought to bear upon youth who are undertaking to acquire education, and these youth may more readily be brought to understand what are the results which soci-

ety expects from them and what are the obligations which they incur to society through accepting the privileges of higher education.

Finally, I want to say a word specifically to the boys of this school, many of whom — or perhaps all of whom — are going on through school to college. You will learn much and you will come to many convictions that you have not had before. You will lose some of the convictions you have held. You will find many things which have been accepted as stereotyped beliefs of mankind throughout all the ages not as clear to you as they were to them. You will find much established in the world in the way of conventions the necessity for which you will not see. Accept the challenge of these propositions and try to go through to definite conclusions which shall be your own. But recognize that final knowledge of truth is not in any man's mind alone; that the realm of knowledge is too great for any individual

to encompass it; that increasing knowledge day by day may modify life so rapidly that even within your years fundamental truth will change in its external aspects and in its significance.

There is a little stanza that expresses what I want to say. It is from the pen of L. A. G. Strong:

> 'If to the ardors of my youth
> Be shown a facet of the truth
> Let me not use so little wit
> To make myself high priest of it,
> Believe it absolute, and blind
> My sight to that which others find.'

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